तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Keeping Krishna in Our Minds

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

We should always keep Krishna within our minds, for Krishna is like the sun. This is the motto of our *Back to Godhead* magazine:

kṛṣṇa—sūrya sama; māyā haya andhakāra
yāhāṅ kṛṣṇa, tāhāṅ nāhi māyāra adhikāra
(Cc. madhya 22.31)

Krishna is just like the brilliant sun, and *māyā*, ignorance, is just like darkness. When the sun is present, there cannot be darkness. So if we keep ourselves in Krishna consciousness always, we cannot be influenced by the darkness of ignorance; rather, we shall always walk very freely in the bright sunshine of Krishna. Kuntidevi therefore prays that Krishna continue to be present with her and the Pandavas.

In fact, however, Krishna was not leaving the Pandavas, just as He never left Vrindavan. In the *śāstra*, the Vedic literature, it is said, *vṛndāvanaṁ parityajya padam ekaṁ na gacchati* — Krishna never goes even one step from Vrindavan. He is so much attached to Vrindavan! How is it, then, that we see that Krishna left Vrindavan and went to Mathura and then far away to Hastinapur and did not return for many years?

Actually, Krishna did not leave, for all the inhabitants of Vrindavan, after Krishna left, were always thinking of him and crying. The only engagement of mother Yasoda, Nanda Maharaja, Radharani, and all the *gopīs*, cows, calves, and cowherd boys was to think of Krishna and cry, and in this way they felt Krishna to be present, because Krishna's presence can be felt more strongly in separation from him. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching — to love Krishna in separation. *śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ govinda-viraheṇa me.* Chaitanya Mahaprabhu thought, "Everything is vacant without Govinda, without Krishna." Everything was vacant, but Krishna consciousness was there.

When we see everything as nothing, but have only Krishna consciousness, we shall have attained the highest perfection. Therefore the *gopīs* are so exalted. Having attained this perfection, they could not forget Krishna even for a single moment. When Krishna went to the forest with his cows and calves, the minds of the *gopīs* at home were disturbed. "Oh, Krishna is walking barefoot," they thought. "There are so many stones and nails on the path, and they must be

next column ☞

pricking Krishna's lotus feet, which are so soft that we think our breasts hard when Krishna puts His lotus feet upon them." Thus they would cry, absorbed in these thoughts. The *gopīs* were so anxious to see Krishna back home in the evening that they would stand on the path, looking to see Krishna returning with His calves and cows. This is Krishna consciousness.

Krishna cannot be absent from a devotee when the devotee is intensely absorbed in Krishna thought. Here, Kuntidevi is very much anxious, thinking that Krishna will be absent, but the actual effect of Krishna's physical absence is that he becomes more intensely present within the mind of the devotee. Therefore, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, by the example of his actual life, taught *vipralambha-sevā*, service of Krishna in separation. Tears would come from his eyes like torrents of rain, for he would feel everything to be vacant for want of Krishna.

There are two stages of meeting Krishna. Being personally present with Krishna, personally meeting him, personally talking with him, and personally embracing him, is called *sambhoga*. But there is another way to be with Krishna, in separation from him, and this is called *vipralambha*. A devotee can benefit from Krishna's association in both ways.

Because we are now in the material world we do not see Krishna directly. Nonetheless, we can see him indirectly. For example, if one sees the Pacific Ocean one can remember Krishna immediately, if one is advanced in spiritual life. This is called meditation. One may think, "The Pacific Ocean is such a vast mass of water, with many large waves, but although I am standing only a few yards from it, I am confident that I am safe, however powerful this ocean may be and however fearful its waves. I am sure that it will not go beyond its limits." How is this happening? By the order of Krishna. Krishna orders, "My dear Pacific Ocean, you may be very big and powerful, but you cannot come beyond this line." In this way one can immediately remember Krishna, or God, who is so powerful that even the Pacific Ocean abides by his order. In this way one can think of Krishna, and that is Krishna consciousness.

— *Teachings of Queen Kunti*, chapter 22.

Overendeavors

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
Śrī Caitanya-śīkṣāmṛta *3.3*

A devotee should give up enthusiasm for big endeavors in three situations. If the person has no funds in the beginning, he should not attempt the work. If his life is nearly finished, he should not start a big project. And if the work requires a lot of manpower and he has no way of getting assistance, then he should not attempt the work. Such things create obstacles in devotion. If huge projects for a temple, hall, or ashram are difficult to execute, then they should not be considered.

— English translation by Sri Bhanu Swami. Unpublished manuscript.

Krishna Kathamrita

Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata, ādi-khaṇḍa 17.143
with commentary by
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

kṛṣṇa-yaśa śunite se kṛṣṇa-saṅga pāi
īśvarera saṅge tāra kabhu tyāga nāi

One who hears glorification of Krishna directly associates with Krishna and is never separated from Him.

COMMENTARY: By hearing glorification of Gaura-Krishna one achieves Gaura-Krishna's direct association, because the topics of Krishna and the names of Krishna are nondifferent from Krishna himself. In other words, the personality of Krishna is absolute, or nondual. There is no tinge of differentiation between him and his names as there is in the illusory world. In the transcendental topics of Gaura there are no topics devoid of Krishna's glories, therefore there is no reason for one to separate *gaura-līlā* from *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

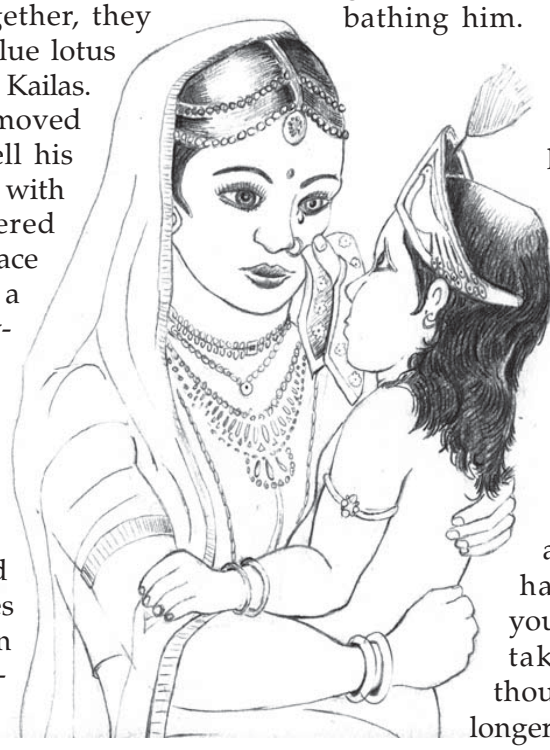
— Vrindavan Das Thakur. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata* with commentary of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Edited and published by Pundarik Vidyanidhi Das. Vrajaraj Press. Vrindavan. 2001.

Krishna Returns Home

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Bhāvanāmṛta Mahākāvya
chapter 17

[Tulasi Manjari is describing to Srimati Radharani about Krishna's return at the end

of a day of herding the cows:] "When Krishna came to the town gate and Nanda Maharaja saw him, Nanda extended his arms and embraced him. Nanda's body became stunned and studded with goose bumps of ecstasy as he took Krishna on his lap. Together, they shone like a beautiful, blue lotus flower in a lake on Mount Kailas. Nanda Baba slightly removed Krishna's turban to smell his head and showered him with tears of love. He covered Krishna's face with his face so that they looked like a spotless autumn cloud covering the cooling moon.



"Queen Yasoda had spent the evening in great distress, walking out of her house onto the palace courtyard and back again, her face dried up from different worries about her son's delay in returning home. Suddenly she saw her beloved boy and her eyes emitted a Yamuna-stream of tears while her breasts emitted a Ganga-stream of milk. Stunned with ecstasy, she embraced Krishna and asked him about his welfare. She was not able to see him properly because her eyes were filled with loving tears. Then Rohini, Balaram's mother, performed a charming *ārati* ceremony for Krishna by waving small golden lamps with burning wicks and then she placed him on his mother's lap. Is Krishna like the moon, sitting on the lap of his birthplace who is like a nectar ocean of parental affection?

"Although Krishna was already sitting on his mother's lap, Yasoda was still stunned with ecstasy. So Krishna told her affectionately, 'O mother, I'm already sitting on your lap! Why don't you look at me instead of showering me with your tears?' Saying this, he wiped the tears from her face with his own hand, making her happy like a female swan on a lake. With her breast milk, Mother Yasoda washed the cow dust from Krishna's body, and lovingly fondled him. Seeing that there was no end to Yasoda's ecstasy — it flowed from her like incomparable waves — Vatsalya Lakshmi, the goddess of parental affection, brought her back to her senses and engaged her in caressing Krishna's body with her hands and engaging her maidservants in anointing and bathing him.

"Yasoda melted with affection as she told Krishna, 'Vatsa, my darling child. O abode of pure love! I was very worried when you were in the forest tending your cows. O moon-faced one, you are not even slightly kind to me. O child, lotus of your family, you don't take your mother with you into the forest even once! O merciful one, although a very long day has passed, and although your father repeatedly tried to take you home, and even though your friends could no longer tolerate their fatigue, hunger and thirst, you still did not come home. Why should this mother continue to maintain her hard and useless life?'

"Madhumangal then said, 'My very whimsical friend Krishna was merged in an ocean of playfulness with his *bālālī* [can mean boyfriends or girlfriends] and forgot you. Mother, what to speak of you, he forgot even himself! I'm his only superior. If I hadn't eventually controlled him then Krishna wouldn't be home yet!'

"Queen Yasoda said, 'Well spoken, Batu! Every day I see nail marks on Krishna's body, but these boys just don't listen to my prohibition! Every day they forcibly scratch his body, which is more tender than a blue lotus flower, while they wrestle with him! Alas! What should I do to stop these naughty boys?'

"O Radha!" Tulasi continued, "After hearing this conversation, I was ordered by Queen Yasoda to do my scheduled duties. Then Rohini went to the kitchen while mother Yasoda hugged Krishna along with Paurnamasi, Kilimba, Mukhara, Gargi, and all the rest. After bathing, Krishna was dressed in his usual yellow garments and his hair was bound in locks on the sides of

his forehead. He was smeared with sandalwood paste and adorned with a *vaijayantī* garland of forest flowers. Then they put on his waist bells, necklaces, armlets, bangles, the *kaustubha* gem, earrings, ankle bells and spotless *tilaka*. Then Balaram, Madhumangal, and the other boys came and Mother Yasoda seated them all. Blissfully she served them nice sweets, scented cold water, and three kinds of food. While they were eating, she said, 'O boys, these dishes are very dear to you!' and served them the five kinds of cakes, like *sīdhukeli*, that you had cooked. Their five senses merged into the ocean of the nectarean fragrance, softness, taste, and forms of those cakes.

"While eating, Madhumangal said, 'O mother, whoever is so fortunate to smell these cakes loses his taste for the heavenly planets or liberation. Curses on the creator for not giving me an unlimited belly! Anyone who refuses when these cakes are served is an offender!' After joking with Madhumangal, Krishna finished His meal and with His mother's permission rested for some time, chewing betel leaves. Then, I came here to see you."

Saying this, Tulasi untied her apron and gave Radhika some remnants of food from Krishna's plate. The nectarean stories about Krishna that Tulasi sprinkled on their ears, and the nectarean Krishna *prasāda* that touched their tongues, were like two cooling rivers that brought Sri Radhika and her girlfriends great delight. ❀

— Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta Mahākavya*. English translation by Adwaita Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 2000.

Avoid Wicked Association

By the medieval poet
Sri Gopal Das

Gopal Das, also known as Ramagopal Das, (c. 1643 or 1673) was the author of the book, Rasa-kalpa-valli. *He came from a* vaidya *family of Sri Khanda, West Bengal, and his guru was a descendent of the famous Raghunandan Thakur. [For more about Raghunandan and the residents of Sri Khanda, see Bindus 42-46.] Gopal Das is widely considered to be among the best poets in Brajabuli literature.*

Sung in *sāraṅga-rāga*

teja mana! hari-vimukhanki saṅga
yāka saṅgahi kumati upajatahi
bhajanaki paḍata vibhaṅga

(Refrain) Shun, O my heart, those averse to Lord Hari. Association with them will give birth to wicked thoughts and break your devotion to the Lord into pieces.

satata asata pada lei yo yāyata
upajata kāminī saṅga
śamana-dūta para- māyu parīkhata
dūra sañe nehāra-i raṅga

It will deviate you from the right path, make you associate with women who are filled with lust, and make the *yamadūtas* happy as they watch you from afar.

atae se hari-nāma sāra parama madhu
pāna karaha choḍi bhaṅga
hari-caraṇa-saro- ruhe māti rahuñ
gopala-dāsa-mana bhṛṅga

Therefore, always sip the sweet honey of lord Hari's holy names. Gopal Das' heart has now become a bumblebee intoxicated by tasting the honey at the lotus flower of Lord Hari's feet. ❀

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